CLAIMS

What is claimed:

1   1.   A method of determining the geographic locations of Internet users,

2 comprising:

3   receiving one of an IP address or domain name associated with an Internet user;

4   determining a geographic address of an entity that owns the IP address;

5   obtaining a route through the Internet to a target host for the IP address;

6   deriving a geographic location of any intermediate hosts contained within the route

7 through the Internet to the target host;

8   analyzing the route and the geographic locations of any intermediate hosts;

9   determining the geographic location of the Internet user; and

10   storing the geographic location of the Internet user in a database along with the

11 geographic locations of a plurality of other Internet users.

1   2.   The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the receiving one of the IP address

2 or the domain name comprises receiving both the IP address and the domain name and the

3 method further comprises verifying that the IP address corresponds to the domain name.

1   3.   The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein the verifying comprises

2 performing an nslookup on one of the IP address or domain name.

1   4.   The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the determining comprises

2   performing a whois for the IP address.

1   5.   The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising checking whether the

2   target host is on-line prior to determining the geographic address.

1   6.   The method as set forth in claim 5, wherein the checking comprises

2   performing a ping.

1   7.   The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the obtaining of the route through

2   the Internet comprises performing a traceroute.

1   8.   The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the analyzing of the route

2   comprises mapping the route to geographic locations stored in a database.

1   9.   The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising assigning a confidence

2   level to the geographic location of the Internet user.

1   10.   The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the determining of the geographic

2   location includes analyzing the domain name for the geographic location.

1   11.   The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising confirming the

2   geographic location of the Internet user.

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1   12.   A method of providing geographic locations of Internet users to requestors,

2   comprising:

3   collecting geographic locations on a plurality of Internet users and storing the

4   geographic locations in a database;

5   receiving a query from a requestor for the geographic location of a particular Internet

6   user, the query containing at least one of an IP address or a domain name for the particular

7   Internet user;

8   determining whether the geographic location of that particular Internet user is

9   available in the database;

10   if the geographic location is available in the database, delivering the geographic

11   location on that particular Internet user to the requestor.

1   13.   The method as set forth in claim 12, wherein if the geographic location is not

2   available in the database, the method further comprises determining the geographic location

3   of the particular Internet user and storing the geographic location in the database.

1   14.   The method as set forth in claim 12, wherein the determining whether the

2   geographic location is available in the database comprises sending a query to a remote

3   database.

1   15.   The method as set forth in claim 12, wherein the determining whether the

2   geographic location is available in the database comprises sending a query to a local

3   database.

1   16.   The method as set forth in claim 12, further comprising selectively delivering

2   information to the Internet user based on the geographic location of the Internet user.

1   17.   The method as set forth in claim 12, further comprising selectively redirecting

2   the Internet user based on the geographic location.

1   18.   A method of tracking the behavior of Internet users based on their activities on

2   the Internet, comprising:

3   obtaining geographic locations of a plurality of Internet users and storing the

4   geographic locations in a database;

5   receiving queries from requestors for the geographic locations of a particular Internet

6   user;

7   delivering the geographic location for that particular Internet user to the requestors;

8   tracking the requestors associated with that particular Internet user; and

9   determining the behavior of the particular Internet user based on the associated

10   requestors.

1   19.   The method as set forth in claim 18, further comprising determining the

2   geographic locations of the plurality of Internet users.

1   20.   The method as set forth in claim 18, wherein the determining of the behavior

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2   comprises generating a profile for that particular Internet user.

1   21.   A method of determining a geographic location of an Internet user that

2   accesses the Internet through a caching proxy server, comprising:

3   embedding an identifiable tag in a web page to form a tagged web page;

4   in response to the Internet user requesting the web page and receiving a request for the

5   web page from the caching proxy server, transmitting the tagged web page to the Internet

6   user through the proxy server;

7   opening a direct connection with the Internet user;

8   communicating with the Internet user through the direct connection;

9   receiving the identifiable tag from the Internet user;

10   obtaining an IP address for the Internet user from use of the identifiable tag; and

11   determining the geographic location of the Internet user.

1   22.   The method as set forth in claim 21, wherein the embedding comprises tagging

2   the web page with a Java applet.

1   23.   The method as set forth in claim 21, wherein the identifiable tag comprises a

2   unique applet parameter tag.

1   24.   The method as set forth in claim 21, further comprising marking the web page

2   as uncachable.

1   25.   The method as set forth in claim 21, wherein the opening of the direct

2   connection comprises accepting the direct connection through a port.

1   26.   A method of determining a geographic location of an IP address on the

2   Internet, comprising:

3   obtaining an access number for an Internet Service Provider;

4   connecting to the Internet Service Provider through the access number;

5   determining an IP address provided by the Internet Service Provider;

6   determining a route through the Internet;

7   determining a geographic location of at least one point of presence for the Internet

8   Service Provider by analyzing the route; and

9   determining the geographic location of the IP address based on the geographic

10   location of the point of presence for the Internet Service Provider.

1   27.   The method as set forth in claim 26, wherein the obtaining of the access

2   number comprises obtaining a dial-up number for the Internet Service Provider.

1   28.   The method as set forth in claim 26, wherein the determining of the route

2   comprises performing a *traceroute*.

1   29.   The method as set forth in claim 26, further comprising storing the geographic

2   location of the IP address.

1   30.   A method for permitting information to be selectively delivered to Internet

2   users, comprising:

3   compiling information on a plurality of Internet users and obtaining data related to the

4   Internet users;

5   storing the information and data related to the plurality of Internet users in at least one

6   database;

7   receiving a query from a requestor regarding a particular Internet user;

8   retrieving the data associated with that particular Internet user; and

9   transmitting the data to the requestor;

10   wherein the data permits the requestor to select desired content for that particular

11   Internet user from a plurality of possible choices of possible content and to deliver the

12   desired content to that particular Internet user.

1   31.   The method as set forth in claim 30, wherein the database is a geography

2   database and the data relates to geographic locations of the Internet users.

1   32.   The method as set forth in claim 30, wherein the database is an authorization

2   database and the data relates to the desired content the particular Internet user is authorized to

3   receive.

1   33.   The method as set forth in claim 30, wherein the database is a network speed

2   database and the data relates to a down-load rate for the particular Internet user.

1   34.   The method as set forth in claim 30, wherein the database is a profile database

2   and the data relates to a profile of the particular Internet user.

1   35.   The method as set forth in claim 30, wherein the database is an interface

2   database and the data relates to an interface of the particular Internet user.

1   36.   A method of determining a geographic location of an Internet user that

2   accesses the Internet through a caching proxy server, comprising:

3   associating a Java applet with a web page;

4   in response to the Internet user requesting the web page and receiving a request for the

5   web page from the caching proxy server, transmitting the web page and associated Java

6   applet to the Internet user through the proxy server;

7   opening a direct connection with the Internet user;

8   communicating with the Internet user through the direct connection;

9   obtaining an IP address for the Internet user; and

10   determining the geographic location of the Internet user.